

fathers who thought that the world was created in the spring. (Can you imagine the early chapters of Genesis starting in the fall?) Well, it was an obvious point to some of the fathers. They also thought, in a consistent pattern, that spring was a likely time for the conception of the Virgin. The period of pregnancy for Mary carried them from spring to the end of December. The Romans, it is true, already had some celebrations at this time: the SATURNALIA was celebrated 17-23 December and it recalled the Golden Age of Rome. This was followed by the SEGILLARIA on the 24th and the BRUMALIA on the 25th...both being thoroughly paganized occasions. So on the new calendar of the church, the birth of the Lord coincided with the Brumalia. Was it coincidence or the invention of toy makers? I am not sure.

The Christmas Season, however, included (in the 4th and 5th centuries) an eight day celebration culminating with the new year. Gregory I added to this a period of fasting for six weeks before the beginning of the occasion. The current difference in the eastern and western dates for the celebration of Christmas is the result of a calendrical change in the middle ages when the older Julian calendar was updated and the new Gregorian calendar could not be accepted by the rivals of Rome. Much of the rest of the Christmas tradition stems from much later times...the Christmas tree from the Reformation period and the plum pudding from some other age!

Without much difficulty you will see that the church has taken about three months of the calendrical year and added a special significance to every day. The Liturgical calendar would have tremendous influence in business and everyday affairs and it is our suggestion that the ecclesiastical devices had a good bit to do with the church's control of the mind and life of mankind during this period. We will note that the general character of the holidays agreed with the Old Testament celebrations..they were joyous occasions to mark the deliverance of God. But at that point the similarities ceased and the supererogation and sacerdotalism increased.

Sacred Ideals

These tie in with the growth of the liturgical seasons and the calendar. They are not limited to days, however, and are found